Numb. CCLV.

he SPECTATOR.

dis amore tumes? ſunt certa piacula quæ te
r purè lecto poterunt recreare libello. Hor.

Saturday, December 22. 1711.

HE Soul, conſidered abſtractedly from its
Paſſions, is of a remiſs and ſedentary Na-
ture, ſlow in its Reſolves, and languiſh-
ing in its Executions. The uſe therefore of
is to ſtir it up and put it upon Action,
the Underſtanding, to enforce the Will,
e the whole Man more vigorous and
the Proſecution of his Deſigns. As this
of the Paſſions in general, ſo it is par-
of Ambition, which puſhes the Soul to
ons as are apt to procure Honour and Re-
to the Actor. But if we carry our Re-
gher, we may diſcover further Ends of
e in implanting this Paſſion in Mankind.
neceſſary for the World, that Arts ſhould
and improved, Books written and tranſ-
Poſterity, Nations conquered and civilized;
the proper and genuine Motives to theſe
great Actions, would only influence
Minds; there would be but ſmall Improve-
e World, were there not ſome common
of Action working equally with all Men.
Principle is Ambition or a Deſire of
which all great Endowments are not ſuf-
e idle and uſeleſs to the Publick, and
Men over-reached, as it were, and
contrary to their natural Inclinations in a
and laudable courſe of Action. For we
obſerve, that Men of the greateſt Abi-
moſt fired with Ambition, and that, on the
mean and narrow Minds are the leaſt ac-
it. Whether it be that the Senſe of their
acities makes them deſpair of coming at
that they have not enough range of Thought
for any good which does not more im-
relate to their Intereſt or Convenience, or
dence, in the very Frame of their Souls,
ſubject them to ſuch a Paſſion as would
to the World, and a Torment to them-

not this Deſire of Fame very ſtrong, the
of obtaining it, and the Danger of loſing
ained, would be ſufficient to deter a Man
vain a Purſuit.

few are there who are furniſhed with A-
ſufficient to recommend their Actions to the
of the World, and to diſtinguiſh them-
from the reſt of Mankind? Providence for
ſets us upon a Level, and obſerves a
oportion in its Diſpenſations towards us.
If it renders us perfect in one Accompliſhment, it generally leaves us defective in another, and ſeems careful rather of preſerving every Perſon from being mean and deficient in his Qualifications, than of making any ſingle one eminent or extraordinary.

And among thoſe, who are the moſt richly endow'd by Nature, and accompliſhed by their own Induſtry, how few are there whoſe Vertues are not obſcured by the Ignorance, Prejudice or Envy of their Beholders? Some Men cannot diſcern between a noble and a mean Action. Others are apt to attribute them to ſome falſe End or Intention; and others purpoſely miſrepreſent, or put a wrong Interpretation on them.

But the more to enforce this Conſideration, we may obſerve that thoſe are generally moſt unſucceſsful in their Purſuit after Fame, who are moſt deſirous of obtaining it. It is *Saluſt*'s Remark upon *Cato*, that the leſs he coveted Glory the more he acquired it.

Men take an Ill-natured Pleaſure in croſſing our Inclinations, and diſappointing us in what our Hearts are moſt ſet upon. When therefore they have diſcovered the paſſionate Deſire of Fame in the Ambitious Man, (as no Temper of Mind is more apt to ſhew it ſelf) they become ſparing and reſerved in their Commendations, they envy him the Satiſfaction of an Applauſe, and look on their Praiſes rather as a Kindneſs done to his Perſon, than as a Tribute paid to his Merit. Others who are free from this natural Perverſeneſs of Temper, grow wary in their Praiſes of one, who ſets too great a value on them, leaſt they ſhould raiſe him too high in his own Imagination, and by Conſequence remove him to a greater diſtance from themſelves.

But further, this Deſire of Fame naturally betrays the Ambitious Man into ſuch Indecencies as are a leſſening to his Reputation. He is ſtill afraid leaſt any of his Actions ſhould be thrown away in private, leaſt his Deſerts ſhould be concealed from the notice of the World, or receive any Diſadvantage from the Reports which others make of them. This often ſets him on empty Boaſts and Oſtentations of himſelf, and betrays him into vain fantaſtick Recitals of his own Performances: His Diſcourſe generally leans one way, and whatever is the Subject of it, tends obliquely either to the detracting from others, or the extolling of himſelf. Vanity is the natural Weakneſs of an Ambitious Man, which expoſes him to the ſecret Scorn and Deriſion of thoſe he converſes with, and ruins the Character he is ſo induſtrious to advance by it. For tho' his Actions are never ſo Glorious, they loſe their Luſtre when they are drawn at large, and ſet to ſhow by his own Hand; and as the World is more apt to find fault than to commend, the Boaſt will probably be cenſured when the great Action that occaſioned it is forgotten.

Beſides, this very Deſire of Fame is looked on as a Meaneſs and an Imperfection in the greateſt Character. A ſolid and ſubſtantial Greatneſs of Soul looks down with a generous Neglect on the Cenſures and Applauſes of the Multitude, and places a Man beyond the little Noiſe and Strife of Tongues. Accordingly we find in our ſelves a ſecret Awe and Veneration for the Character of one who moves above us in a regular and illuſtrious Courſe of Vertue, without any regard to our good or ill Opinions of him, to our Reproaches or Commendations. As on the contrary it is uſual for us, when we would take off from the Fame and Reputation of an Action, to aſcribe it to Vain-Glory, and a deſire of Fame in the Actor. Nor is this common Judgment and Opinion of Mankind ill-founded; for certainly it denotes no great Bravery of Mind to be worked up to any noble Action by ſo ſelfiſh a Motive, and to do that out of a Deſire of Fame, which we could not be prompted to by a diſintereſted Love to Mankind, or by a generous Paſſion for the Glory of him that made us.

Thus is Fame a thing difficult to be obtained by all, but particularly by thoſe who thirſt after it, ſince moſt Men have ſo much either of Ill-nature or of Warineſs, as not to gratifie and ſooth the Vanity of the Ambitious Man, and ſince this very Thirſt after Fame naturally betrays him into ſuch Indecencies as are a leſſening to his Reputation, and is it ſelf looked upon as a Weakneſs in the greateſt Characters.

In the next place, Fame is eaſily loſt, and as difficult to be preſerved as it was at firſt to be acquired. But this I ſhall make the Subject of a following Paper.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians,

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this preſent Saturday, the 22d Day of December, will be preſented the Tragedy of Macbeth, with all the Decorations proper to the Play. The part of the King by Mr. Keene, Macbeth by Mr. Mills, Macduff by Mr. Wilks, Banquo by Mr. Powell, Lenox by Mr. Booth, Seyton by Mr. Elrington, Hecat by Mr. Johnſon, three Witches by Mr. Dogget, Mr Penkethman, and Mr. Bullock, Lady Macbeth by Mrs. Knight, Lady Macduff by Mrs. Porter.

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